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ABSTRACT

This report describes the early childhood education programs of the Des Moines Independent Community School District and provides evaluation of the programs' context, process, and product. Following a preface that includes the city's early childhood philosophy, the first section of the report presents a context evaluation of the programs, including their history, organizational structures, revenue, and expenditures. The second section details a process evaluation, including responsibility statements for supervisory and consultant staff in early childhood education, instructional philosophies, assessment tools, and staff development activities. The third section presents a product or outcome evaluation of the programs, including cost/benefit analysis, improvements in the preceding three years, Head Start summary, early childhood special education placement information, and survey of skills needed for entering kindergarten. The final section of the report outlines future plans of the combined early childhood programs. Three appendices contain an early childhood organizational chart, early childhood program locations, and early childhood policies, standards, and regulations. (HTH)

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Early Childhood Programs
Program Evaluation

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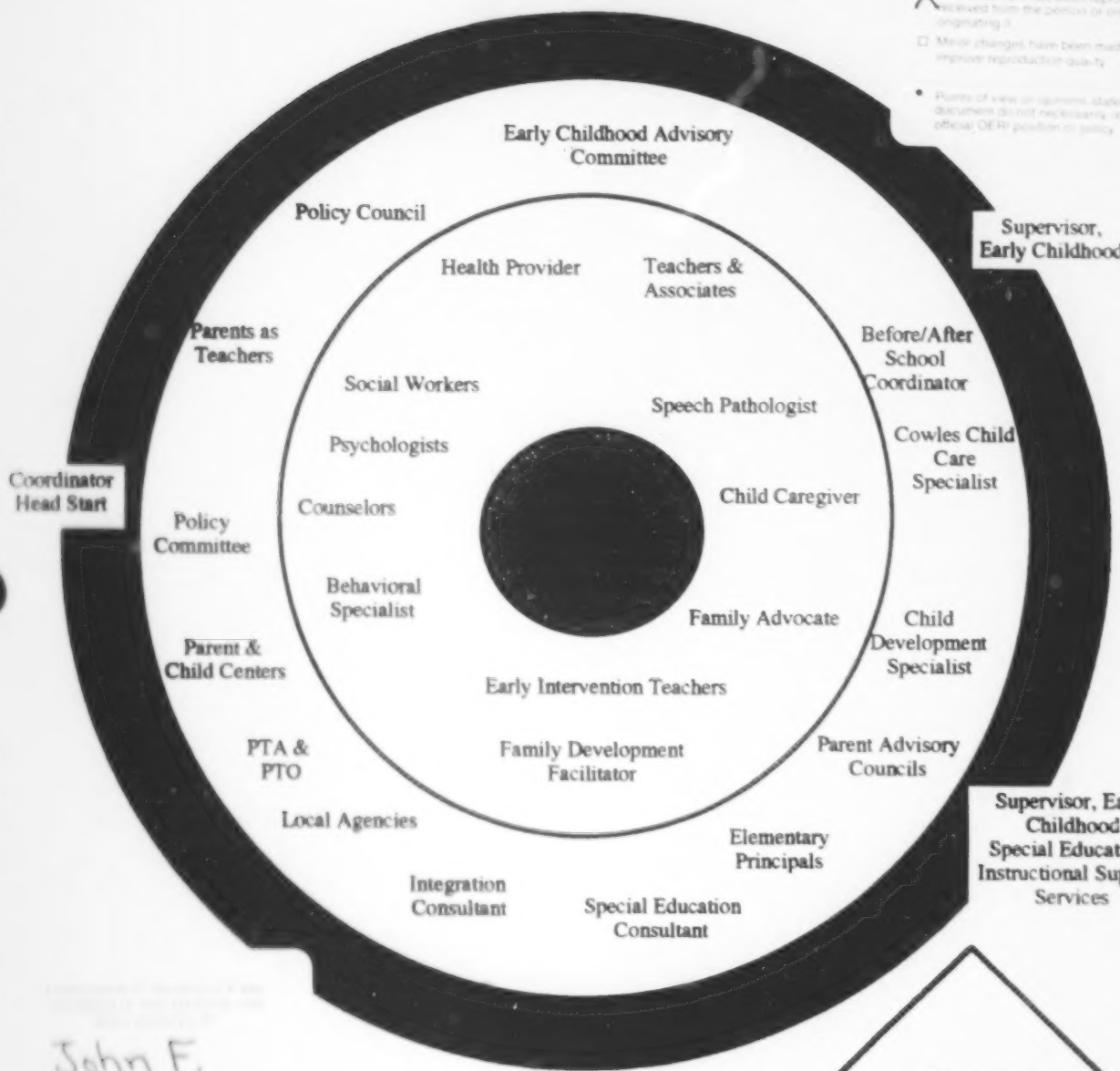

Focus on Program Evaluation

ED 026758

John F. Thompkins

DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

OCTOBER, 1997

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
EVALUATION ABSTRACT

Context Evaluation

The early childhood education programs in the Des Moines Independent Community School District provide children from birth through age eight with early educational experiences that are developmentally appropriate to meet the needs and backgrounds of each child. Many different early childhood programs are available to young children and families in the Des Moines Independent Community School District. Program Services include The Parent-Child Center, Special Education Early Intervention Services, Parents As Teachers, Des Moines Preschool Program, Montessori Preschool, Special Education Preschool, Cowles Children's Center, Child Care at Alternative High Schools (Teddy Bear Town Child Care and Gingerbread Express Child Care), Head Start, Early Learning Centers, Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, Downtown School and Metro Kids Before and After School Child Care Program.

Input Evaluation

Early childhood education programs employ 328 staff members (full and part time) and operate with funds from federal, state, local and fee-based funds. Total revenue and expenditures for 1996-97 early childhood education programs is $6,559,928. Although kindergarten through second grade is included in the early education continuum, staff count and budget information are reflected in other curriculum evaluation reports and are not in this document.

Process Evaluation

Four main instructional philosophies have been adopted: 1) developmental appropriateness, 2) integrated and comprehensive services, 3) parent involvement and family-focused services, and 4) early intervention. Evaluation of children's progress is primarily measured through the use of criterion-referenced tests and authentic assessments. The use of standardized tests is minimal.

Professional training and continuing education are important components of early childhood education. Staff members are provided on-going opportunities to participate in staff development and in-service focusing on educational techniques, current research in the field and new instructional methods.

The use of technology has expanded. Computers are used by children as a learning tool. Staff use technology for management tasks.

Product Evaluation

Early childhood programs help fulfill the district's mission by providing a variety of programs that accommodate the needs of children from diverse backgrounds and different developmental levels. Surveys and studies have been done to evaluate the district's early childhood programs. The results support the fact that students make significant gains and there is strong parental support of the programs.

Future Planning

The following needs listed in order of priority will guide the direction of the early childhood programs.

* Coordination of parent programs to increase and improve parents' participation in their child's educational program.
* Coordination of support and educational opportunities for staff to maximize resources.
* Proof of effectiveness of early childhood programs.
* Better utilization of resources to increase preschool experience for ESL students.

A copy of this report is available upon request from the Department of School Improvement, Des Moines Independent Community School District, 1800 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-3399, or you may telephone: 515-242-7836.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN BY DOING

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October, 1997

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DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Mission Statement

"The Des Moines Independent Community School District will provide a quality educational program to a diverse community of students where all are expected to learn."

Early Childhood Philosophy

Early childhood is the time from birth through age eight when children begin to explore, ask questions and create. Children must learn to live with themselves and others and to approach the world with curiosity and a desire for life-long learning. We believe the family is the most important influence and has the greatest impact on children's lives.

Early childhood programs are based on the premise that children learn best through:

- An experiential, integrated approach to education that allows children to explore, discover, interact and solve problems.
- A safe, nurturing environment that promotes physical, social, emotional and intellectual development while meeting individual needs.
- A multicultural, non-sexist, developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Cooperative relationships among home, school and community.

Early childhood programs have the responsibility to help all children develop to their maximum potential.

CONTEXT EVALUATION

The early childhood education programs in the Des Moines Independent Community School District provide children from birth through age eight with early educational experiences that are developmentally appropriate to the different needs and backgrounds of each child. In January, 1992, the district adopted the *Framework for Early Childhood Education*. The *Framework*, developed by the district's Early Childhood Steering Committee, is based on the *Standards of Quality in Early Childhood Education* established by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and on the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Eight* defined by the National Asociation for the Education of Young Children. The *Framework* recognizes the interactive nature of a child's intellectual, social, physical and emotional development and stresses the importance of parent, school and community involvement. It is used as a guide for planning early childhood programs. The following early childhood education programs work together to serve as an important foundation for learning and development:

The Early Childhood Education Programs serve as an important foundation for learning and development in a child's life.

- Des Moines Preschool Program
- Early Childhood Special Education Program
- Head Start
- Early Learning Centers/Parents as Teachers
- Cowles Children's Center
- Metro Kids School-Age Child Care

Through these varied educational experiences, children develop a positive attitude toward learning, gain important social skills and develop a strong foundation for future educational achievements. Early childhood programs are committed to serving the diverse needs for early educational experiences in the Des Moines community.

Early establishment of a home-school partnership is critical for educational success.

Parent involvement is a critical element in early childhood education programs. A variety of educational services and opportunities are provided for parents. Family-oriented education and assistance is the most effective and caring way to provide children with supportive and stable learning environments.

History of Early Childhood Programs

The Des Moines Independent Community School District has supported early childhood programs for over 100 years. The following timeline demonstrates the origins of early childhood programs and their current status.

Table 1—Highlights of Early Childhood Education Historical Perspectives

Then...	**Now...**
In 1846, the first two grade schools were established, three years before the organization of the first Des Moines School District.	In the Des Moines Independent Community School District, 44 elementary schools and 12 other sites serve young children.
In 1884, the second kindergarten program in the nation was implemented in Des Moines. By 1897, all 11 school buildings had a half-day program for five-year-olds.	Kindergarten programs are in all elementary schools: 92 half-day sessions and 41 full-day sessions, including 17 full-day, multi-age classes.
Since 1991, the state has funded Early Childhood Learning Centers, Parent Centers and Innovative K-3 programs at Lucas, McKinley and Moulton Elementary Schools. Comprehensive services are provided for at-risk children from birth-third grade.	The Early Childhood Learning Centers at these sites and the kindergarten classes at Lucas School are recognized as meeting the national standards of quality set out by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs and have received national accreditation. During the 1996-97 school year they were re-accredited.
The Downtown School opened in 1993 in cooperation with the business community to offer a research-based, developmentally appropriate early childhood program in a multi-age setting of 5, 6 and 7 year old children.	The Downtown School has expanded one age level each year. During 1996-97, 112 children (5 - 11 years old) were enrolled.

Then . . .	Now . . .
A Montessori program for 3-6 year old children was initiated at Hillis School in 1993-94 to provide an option for families.	During 1995-96, Montessori instruction was expanded to include children 6-9 years old. Classes were relocated to Cowles School in 1996-97.
Head Start was established for 3-4 year old children in 1965 with federal money. The Des Moines program began as a summer experimental project, serving low-income families within designated areas.	During 1996-97, 424 children participated in the Head Start program in 12 elementary schools and Scavo High School. The Scavo Head Start program is a full day program funded by Head Start dollars and state at-risk funds. The other 12 programs offer 3 1/2 hour, 4 day a week classes. Six sites were co-located with ECSE classes. Drake University Parent and Child Center offers a comprehensive educational, health and social services program to parents and their children, from birth to age three. Wallace and King Elementary Schools house two of these programs for area families.
Early Childhood Special Education was implemented in 1973. In 1976, services in Des Moines were expanded to include children with disabilities from birth to age six.	During 1996-97, approximately 329 children were enrolled in Early Childhood Special Education. Almost two-thirds of center-based children participated in an integrated program.
The Des Moines Preschool Program, a fee-based service, was initiated at two sites in 1975, at the request of parents.	During 1996-97, over 800 children were served at 21 centers in the Des Moines Preschool Program.

Then . . .	Now . . .
In 1975, programs were operated separately by Head Start, Special Education, parent fees and Title I funds.	In 1994-95, two integrated demonstration programs were opened at Wallace and McKinley with blended funding. Blended programs were available at eleven additional sites.
In 1979-80, the Metro Kids Before and After School Child Care Program was implemented in response to the needs of families. In 1988, services were expanded to provide school-age child care on non-school days.	During 1996-97, over 2,700 children participated in the Metro Kids Before and After School Child Care Program. Before/after kindergarten care was offered at schools with sufficient interest. Full-day care was available in four regional sites when school was not in session.
In 1987, Cowles Children's Center was opened at Cowles School to serve children three to five years old in a full-day preschool/child care program. Services were expanded in 1989 to serve children from six weeks to six years old. In 1992-93 the center served 126 children, the maximum number of children allowed by licensing.	In 1996-97, the center was licensed for and enrolled 165 children.

Early Childhood Terms

The following terms are often used in describing the types of programs and methods used in early childhood education. These relate to programs in the Des Moines Public Schools.

Active Learning Through Play is based on the premise that play is the primary way learning occurs for young children. This approach supports the natural process of inquiry as children discover concepts, relationships and practice new skills.

Authentic Assessment is based upon authentic evidence of what a child can accomplish, as gathered through observation, conferences and samples of work. Authentic assessment is utilized by district early childhood education programs in lieu of standardized testing.

A **Co-Location Program** is one in which programs governed by two or more different agencies occupy the same classroom. Curriculum is shared, however, certain standards are maintained by each agency.

A **Delegate Agency** is a public or private non-profit organization or agency to which a grantee has delegated authority to operate all or part of the Head Start program. The Des Moines school district is a delegate agency of Drake University Head Start.

Developmentally Appropriate practices are based on the age, developmental level and cultural heritage of each child. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Iowa Department of Education recommend practices that are developmentally appropriate.

A **Fully Integrated** program has both typical students and students with special needs occupying the same space with coordinated programming by special education and general education staff.

A **Grantee Agency** is a public or private agency that receives funds directly from the federal government to conduct a particular program. The grantee agency may conduct the program itself or may give some of the money to a delegate agency to run part of the program. Drake University serves as the grantee agency for Head Start.

High Scope Curriculum is a developmentally appropriate instructional program for early childhood programs that is supported by research.

The **Integration of Learning Experiences** is a curriculum design, without subject area boundaries, that reflects the integrated nature of development and learning.

Non-graded/Multi-age Education is the practice of teaching children of different ages and ability levels together in the same classroom, without dividing them or the curriculum into steps labeled by "grade" designations.

The **Primary Program** is a set of guiding principles, recommended by the Iowa Department of Education, to assist teachers and parents in creating an optimum learning environment for all young children.

The **Reggio Emilia Approach** fosters children's learning through social interaction and the use of many symbolic languages. It is a collaborative partnership involving children, teachers, and parents. Learning is project focused utilizing many materials and various media.

The **Montessori Method** espouses freedom through order and self-discipline. The child is free to learn at his or her individual pace in a noncompetitive atmosphere in an attractive and orderly "prepared environment."

Organizational Structure

Early Childhood Special Education is under the umbrella of the Department of Student Services. The Des Moines Preschool Program, Head Start, the child care services and the primary grades are under the direction of the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Drake University Head Start serves as the grantee agency for the district's Head Start program.(Appendix 1)

Programs for Children from Birth to Age Three

Parent-Child Center

Drake University Head Start Program Parent and Child Center is a comprehensive educational program for low income pregnant women and children birth to three that provides home-based visits, parent meetings and parent-child interactive sessions. Services for families are provided at Wallace and King Elementary Schools, Oakridge Neighborhood and Youth Emergency services & Shelter. Beginning July 1, 1997, the Parent and Child Center will become an Early Head Start program. (Appendix 1)

Special Education Early Intervention Services

A family-centered program and includes home visits and play groups for children with disabilities from birth to age three. There are four state signatory agencies tha tparticipate in this program. They are the Depatment of Human services, Public Health and Education as well as Child Health Specialty Clinic.

Interagency collaboration is a mandate for this program.

Parents as Teachers

State funded educational support program for the parents of at-risk infants and toddlers. Monthly home visits and on-site group meetings at Lucas, McKinley, and Moulton enable the parents and parent educators to work as partners.

Parent expectations are at powerful predictor of children's later school success.

Teddy Bear Town, Casady High School
Gingerbread Express, Scavo High School

Licensed centers provide quality care for the infants and toddlers of adolescent parents who are enrolled in school and striving to complete their high school education.

Quality care enhances parenting skills and strengthens families.

Programs for Children from Ages Three to Five

Des Moines Preschool Program

The Des Moines Preschool Program provides educational experiences for young children, ages three to five. Two hour sessions are held two or three days per week. Services are fee-based and are located in 16 elementary schools and four community buildings throughout the city of Des Moines. A certified teacher with early childhood training utilizes activity centers to provide developmentally appropriate hands-on experiences.

Preschool is a crucial time in the intellectual development of children.

Montessori Preschool

Three half-day sessions are held five days per week at Cowles School for children ages three to five. The lead teacher is Montessori credentialed. Montessori is hands-on learning that focuses on independence and self-reliance. Children are encouraged to work at their own pace and at projects of their own choosing. Specific equipment, materials and instructional techniques are used by the program to follow the Montessori philosophy. The program is based on self-directed, non-competitive activities. The prepared environment fosters order, independence, coordination, inner discipline, positive self-image and love of learning.

Self-directed non-competitive activities help children become problem solvers.

Special Education Preschool Program

A half-day classroom experience for children with disabilities, who are three to six-years old, is offered at 12 sites in 30 class sections. Transportation is provided as a special education support service.

Integrated programs are available on a regular basis.

A teacher and associate facilitate individual and group activities that relate to the child's special education plans and promote each child's development

Cowles Children's Center

Cowles Children's Center is a full day, fee-based preschool/child care program serving 165 children of Des Moines school employees and Des Moines community members. Care is provided in seven classrooms for children ages six weeks through school-age. The program follows the National Association for the Education of Young Children's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice and is involved in that organization's accreditation and self study process. The center is licensed by the Department of Human Services. Each classroom is staffed by a certified teacher and other trained and experienced staff members. Integration or full inclusion of children with special needs occurs.

Head Start

As a delegate agency, the Des Moines school district implements Head Start programs in twelve elementary school sites, as well as a full day center at Scavo High School.

Early intervention services help families provide a rich environment critical for early learning.

There are six components in Head Start: education, nutrition, social services, parent involvement, physical, mental, and dental health and disabilities (children with special needs).

Developmentally appropriate learning environments are provided by the teaching staff with the ongoing input from Head Start parents. Staff use one of the following curriculums in their classrooms: High Scope, Primary Program, Reggio or Creative Curriculum.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the program as volunteers and have a crucial voice in the administration of Head Start.

Early Learning Centers

Pre-kindergarten programs are part of the district's services at the at-risk grant schools, Lucas, McKinley and Moulton.

Collaborative efforts provide comprehensive child development services.

Home visits, monthly parent meetings and parent education opportunities build upon the partnerships formed in the Parents as Teachers program and provide family support.

Programs for Children from Five to Eight Years of Age

Kindergarten through Second Grade

The primary grades provide an important foundation for later development and school success. In response to current early childhood education research and theory, the district has adopted the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices. This approach is based on integrated and experiential learning. Activities are organized to allow for individual differences, interests and various ability levels of children. There are numerous opportunities for children to make choices, to manipulate and explore their environment and to interact with adults and other children. Arrangement of the learning environment and instructional materials and equipment are utilized to encourage and support a young child's curiosity, creativity and exploration through hands-on experiences.

Expectations for young children must be reasonable, appropriate and supportive of individual differences.

Downtown School

In 1993, the Downtown School was founded in cooperation with the business community to serve approximately 45 five, six and seven year old students that reflect the ethnic, cultural and soci-economic diversity of the Des Moines Public Schools. The school is able to capitalize on the resources of the downtown environment and reflects current educational research. The curriculum follows the Framework for Early Childhood Education and emphasizes parental involvement, small class sizes, developmentally appropriate teaching practices, a multi-age learning environment and increased instructional time.

Reduced class size and additional adults help promote learning.

Innovative K-3 Program

The Innovative K-3 Program is another component of the district's services at the at-risk grant schools, Lucas, Moulton and McKinley. The programming consists of integration of special programs, reduced class size, flexible groupings, elimination of letter grades, use of learning centers, full-day kindergarten and developmentally appropriate practices.

The curriculum in the early grades must provide meaningful contents for children's learning.

Metro Kids Before and After School Child Care Program

The Metro Kids Care Program serves families who need child care services for school-age children. The program is open to children in kindergarten through fifth grade and provides on-site child care programming before and after school. Full days at regional sites is provided on non-school days. Metro Kids Care is available to all elementary children enrolled in the district elementary schools. A wide variety of activities are offered for the children in the program. The child care services are fee-based and self-supporting.

Children in child care utilize and develop the educational skills and positive behaviors that are taught in the classroom each day.

INPUT EVALUATION

Revenue

Early Childhood Education operates with support from federal, state and local sources, as well as from the financial support of fee-based programs.

Kindergarten, first and second grades are supported by general district funds and are not included in the report.

The sources of revenue for Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education and child care/preschool programs are identified in the tables that follow.

Table 2—Sources of Revenue for 1996-97

Source	Amount (*in dollars*)
Federal Part B—Early Childhood Special Education	1,214,382
Federal 619—Early Childhood Special Education	198,600
Federal Part H—Early Childhood Special Education	83,653
Des Moines Head Start (Federal and State)	877,708
Des Moines Head Start (District)	215,100
State Weighted Special Education	1,378,188
Phase II	49,390
Heartland Area Education Agency	10,000
Child Care/Preschool (fee-based) - Parent Fees	2,532,907
TOTAL RESOURCES	6,559,928

Des Moines Fee-Based Programs

Cowles Children's Center, Metro Kids Child Care and the Des Moines Preschool Programs operate on the funds generated from family fees. Child care fees are subsidized for eligible families by State Block Grant Funds, State of Iowa Promise Jobs Program, the Central Iowa Education and Training Consortium, Child Care Resource Center of Central Iowa and the Transitional Child Care Program. The 1997/98 fees per child for each program are identified below:

Metro Kids Child Care	
Registration Fee	$15/year
Before School Care	$24/week
After School Care	$24/week
Before/after School Care	$39/week
Before/After Kindergarten	$59/week
Full-Day School-age Care(during school breaks/conferences)	$80/week
Cowles Children's Center	
Registration Fee	$25/year
Full-Day Preschool/Child Care for infants	$138/week
Full-Day Preschool/Child Care for Age 2	$115/week
Full-day Preschool/Child Care for Age 3	$105/week
Full-day Preschool/Child Care for Ages 4-5	$100/week
Des Moines Preschool Programs	
Registration Fee	$15/year
2-day/week sessions	$48/month
3-day/week sessions	$69/month
Montessori	
Registration Fee	$15/year
5-day week sessions	$156/month

Human Resources and Other Expenditures

The following expenditures apply to the district's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), fee-based preschool/child care programs and the Head Start program.

Table 3— Expenditures for 1996-97

Position	ECSE		Fee-Based		Head Start	
	# of Staff	Cost (Includes Benefits)	# of Staff	Cost (Includes Benefits)	# of Staff	Cost (Includes Benefits)
Administrative Positions	1	0[a]	3	225,281	1	50,500
Teachers	22.4	1,005,813	0	0	13	479,548
Teacher Associates	18	340,348	0	0	13	306,357
Preschool & Child Care Staff	0	0	216	1,642,221	0	0
Family Advocates	0	0	0	0	9	111,506
Professional Support Staff	17.9	907,134	0	0	2	69,386
Assistants & Specialists	0	0	3	94,165	1	26,000
Secretarial/Clerical	2	49,795	5	126,456	0	0
TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES	61.3	$2,303,090	227	$2,088,123	39	$1,043,297

Item	ECSE	Fee-Based	Head Start
Equipment	$15,700	$ 12,947	$5,000
Food	8,081	215,152	0[b]
Purchased Services	26,200	23,722	0
Supplies	10,897	97,547	13,712
Travel	12,750	9,771	13,333
Transportation	315,000	0	0
Indirect Cost	242,495	73,774[c]	0
Other	0	11,871	19,466
TOTAL EXPENSES	$631,123	444,784	$49,511
GRAND TOTAL	$2,934,213	$2,532,907	$1,092,808

a $80,997 paid by AEA 11 funds
b Provided by Grantee
c 3% of Fee-Based Program Expenditures

In-service/Staff Development Costs

The cost of in-service and staff development opportunities are not specified in detail. These opportunities are an integral part of each program and are provided by the supervisors and coordinators as stated in their responsibility statements. The majority of staff development is provided during regularly scheduled staff meetings and therefore has no additional cost.

Community Resources

Early Childhood Education collaborates with a variety of state and local agencies and organizations in order to enhance its services. The agencies listed below work with the programs on a regular basis in order to benefit the children and families they serve.

Financial support or volunteers for special projects
- KVI
- AETNA Foundation
- Ingram Entertainment
- Kiwanis Club
- Meredith Corporation
- Polk County Medical Auxiliary
- U. S. West
- Variety Club

Referrals and joint planning to meet family needs
- Area Comprehensive Evaluation Services
- Child and Adolescent Guidance Center
- Children and Families of Iowa
- Clark Street House of Mercy
- Des Moines Hearing and Speech Center
- Family Violence Center
- Iowa Methodist Hospital
- Mercy Hospital
- Young Women's Resource Center

Enrichment activities for expansion of curriculum
- Des Moines Parks and Recreation
- Iowa Arts and Recreation Council
- Metro Arts Alliance

Services related to the mission of the community agency
- Association for Prevention of Blindness
- Broadlawns Hospital
- Central Iowa Child Care Resource Center
- Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium
- Child and Adult Food Program
- Deaf Services of Iowa
- Heartland Area Education Agency 11
- Job Service of Iowa
- Lutheran Social Services
- Mercy Franklin Center
- Polk County Department of Social Services
- Polk County Public Health Department
- Success/Way to Grow
- Student Assistance Program
- Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, & Children
- YWCA

Tuition subsidies
- Central Iowa Child Care Resource Center
- Department of Human Services
- Des Moines Area Religious Council
- Iowa Block Grant
- Promise Jobs Program
- Transitional Child Care Program
- United Way of Central Iowa

(List continued on next page)

Staff development

- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council
- Des Moines Area Community College
- Drake University
- Iowa State University

Materials and Equipment

Early Childhood Education requires a variety of materials to educate children in a developmentally appropriate manner. Classrooms are furnished with basic equipment such as child-sized tables and chairs, shelving, storage space, small toys, construction toys, puzzles, blocks, arts and crafts materials, playhouse furniture and accessories, record and tape players, books, easels, sand/water table, math and other manipulatives, and language games of picture lotto, story sequence cards and letter puzzles. Rooms for infants and toddlers also include high-chairs, cribs, swings, walkers, changing tables and play toys. Adaptive equipment of all types is used to accommodate children with physical disabilities. In addition, special vests or child safety restraints are utilized on buses for Early Childhood Special Education children.

Space Allocations

Programs for young children have unique physical space requirements. These include child-size toilet facilities adjacent to classrooms, adequate indoor and outdoor space for active and quiet activities, and dedicated space that is handicapped accessible. Currently, most schools in which there are early childhood programs do not provide space that adequately meets these requirements. The Department of Human Services requires classroom size of 35 sq. ft./per child.. A complete listing of programs by facilities can be found in Appendix 2.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Responsibility Statements

Responsibility statements of supervisory and consultant staff in early childhood education are provided below.

Supervisor, Early Childhood Programs

Plans preschool and child care programming, manages fiscal resources, supervises and evaluates staff and promotes positive community relations. Professional growth activities for early childhood staff are planned, developed and implemented to promote developmentally appropriate practices. The Early Childhood Supervisor tasks include providing support to early childhood teachers, the Cowles Children's Center, the Des Moines Preschool Program, the Metro Kids Care child care services and the Cowles Elementary Programs. This position reports to the Executive Director of Elementary/Early Childhood Programs.

Supervisor, Early Childhood Special Education/Instructional Support Services

Supervises and evaluates personnel in speech/language pathology, occupational/physical therapy and early childhood special education. Provides sole administrative leadership and supervision to staff providing early intervention services for children birth through age three in the home. Manages fiscal resources for all programs. Works with staff to recommend instructional methods, materials and curriculum adjustments for use with students and provides in-service and workshops for teachers, students, parents and other professional staff. Recruits and interviews applicants, makes staff assignments and provides leadership in raising and maintaining professional practices and procedures. Develops and maintains liaison with community agencies that provide early childhood services. This position reports to the Executive Director of Student Services.

Program Coordinator, Head Start

Administers the Head Start program in accordance with the Head Start Federal Performance Standards, district policies and the Iowa Department of Human Services licensing requirements. Ensures that conditions exist in all centers that enable all standards to be met or exceeded in all component areas. Develops and implements plans for center improvement that reflect current professional literature and existing local circumstances. Prepares and submits yearly proposals to secure federal and state dollars for program continuance as well as completes the annual community needs assessments and all other required federal, state and district reports. Develops the Head Start budget and works closely with the accounting department to maintain the annual budget. Submits all fiscal and program reports required by the grantee. Establishes an extensive work plan for each of the six components of the Head Start program and specifies and mandates staff responsibilities. Assists building administrators in supervising and evaluating staff. Provides fiscal management of the program. Develops and maintains liaison with community agencies that provide early childhood and family services. This position reports to the Executive Director of the Elementary/Early Childhood Programs.

Metro Kids Before/ After School Child Care Coordinator

Responsible for coordinating and providing leadership, management and technical advice for the operation of an effective and efficient school age child care program. Plans, implements and evaluates child care programming and supervises and evaluates child care staff. Interacts daily with staff, principals, parents and children who utilize before/after school child care services. Also trains current and new staff, oversees parent payment policy and purchases curriculum materials. This position reports to the Supervisor of Early Childhood.

Child Development Specialist

Coordinates services for the Des Moines Preschool Program, the Montessori Preschool Program and Cowles Children's Center. Supervises, trains and evaluates staff and works cooperatively with principals and parents on a daily basis. Assists in planning and implementing developmentally appropriately programs and approves plans for children's activities each day. Also revises necessary forms and handbooks and attends Parent Advisory Board Meetings. This position reports to the Supervisor of Early Childhood.

Instructional Philosophies

The teaching approach in early childhood education is changing. The field recognizes that the personal and individual needs of children must be addressed in order to facilitate learning. To meet these needs, four main instructional philosophies have been embraced by the Des Moines school district: 1) developmental appropriateness, 2) the need for integrated and comprehensive services, 3) the need for parent involvement, family involvement and family focused services and 4) early intervention.

Developmental Appropriateness

As recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of State Boards of Education, and current research, the Des Moines School District recommends the use of developmentally appropriate methods in early childhood education. In this preferred method, play is seen as a primary vehicle for learning and exploration and teachers attend to the different needs, interests and developmental levels of individual children. There are two dimensions to developmental appropriateness: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness is concerned with the universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur during the first eight years of a child's life. Knowledge of this typical development provides teachers with a framework to prepare and plan suitable experiences and learning environments. Individual appropriateness recognizes that each child has a unique personality, learning style, family background and, thus, an individual pattern and timing of growth.

In developmentally appropriate settings, children interact with caring and supportive adults in an atmosphere that promotes curiosity. Adults working with infants have frequent eye contact with babies, use soothing voices, respond quickly to signs of distress, carry children to provide a wide variety of experiences and use daily routines to play and talk together. Toddlers and preschoolers are given ample opportunities to explore the world around them, to practice new skills and to experience independence and success. Teachers and caregivers show patience and understanding of children's learning through self-initiated activities, relationships with other children and their need at times to take comfort in familiar objects and people.

Preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms are organized with learning centers where children can read, work with blocks, explore science, listen to tapes of stories and music, create art, engage in dramatic play and manipulate mathematics materials. Children move between activities, working collaboratively in pairs and groups. There is a large assortment of children's books, writing materials, resource books, blocks, art supplies and other objects. Traditional subjects are taught through hands-on experience, which current research has demonstrated as the most effective teacher of children. Teachers function as architects, monitors, coaches, questioners and coordinators. By adopting the Framework for Early Childhood Education, the Board of Directors has supported and recommended the implementation of developmentally appropriate methods in the district's classrooms.

For additional information, the following documents are available in the Department of Elementary/Early Childhood Programs:

1. Framework for Early Childhood Education
2. Early Childhood Belief Statements
3. Early Childhood Curriculum Guide
4. Developmental Checklists, Pre-K, K-2
5. Kindergarten Brochure *A Partnership Between Parent, Child and Teacher*
6. Homework Brochures, K-2, 3-5
7. Des Moines Preschool Program Handbook
8. The Primary Program

Integrated and Comprehensive Services

The district recognizes there are children and families who require a wide range of support services in order to cope with daily life. In some instances, intensive services may be required so the child can benefit from the educational setting. Job loss, child neglect, teenage pregnancy, alcohol/drug abuse and poverty are real factors in the lives of many families. The district offers comprehensive support services in order to meet the child and family needs. These include:

- immunizations
- referral and follow-up for health needs
- adequate meals for children
- nutrition counseling
- family-centered parent education and support
- crisis intervention
- adult literacy instruction
- family counseling and assistance
- social activities that promote family togetherness
- referrals to appropriate agencies
- developmentally appropriate educational activities for children
- home visit programs
- before and after school child care
- screening and assessment to identify children with special needs

A wide variety of collaborative efforts between community agencies enhances the district's programs and ensures comprehensive services.

The district is also dedicated to integrated services for children. There are a variety of program options for integrated experiences between children with disabilities and children without disabilities. Moreover, early childhood education promotes the integration of cultural and socio-economic diversity. As children form relationships with children of various backgrounds, they learn to respect differences. This is an important part of development during the early childhood years, which creates a life-long attitude.

Parent Involvement and Family-Focused Services

The district recognizes the family as the primary influence in the lives of children. As early childhood programs address the needs of children, they must also address the needs of families. It is important for parents to feel that they can meet the basic needs of their children for safety, for food, for emotional support and for health care. Parents also need to feel that what they do with their children is valuable and important. The district's programs work to assist families. They focus on enhancing parenting skills and attending to the forces that impinge upon them. Early childhood services provide a secure, accepting climate where families can explore their goals, beliefs and concerns. This helps to promote and strengthen informal ties among families in a neighborhood, to advocate other community agencies and services and to reach out to families who are unwilling or unable to seek support. Parents are also encouraged to participate in programs and the decision-making process, to be informed about their children's experiences and progress and to serve as program volunteers or employees. Rather than conflict with parental responsibility, the district strives to empower and affirm families.

Early Intervention

More than 400,000 young children are exposed to health risks such as low birth weight; prenatal exposure to drugs, alcohol or smoking; lead poisoning; malnutrition or child abuse and neglect each year. One in four children younger than six are growing up in families that cannot afford safe housing, adequate nutrition, health care or quality child care. The district recognizes that school readiness is more than academic knowledge. Readiness involves children's health, self-esteem and social competence. Early childhood intervention programs respond to these needs with comprehensive support services, developmentally appropriate educational methods and collaboration between community agencies.

Assessment Tools

Assessment in early childhood is continuous and based on each child's performance. Programs utilize developmentally appropriate, family-centered and authentic assessment tools. The National School Boards Association, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Association for Childhood Education International and the National Association of Elementary School Principals have recommended the elimination of the use of group standardized tests for all young children. Appropriate assessment methods compare children with general benchmarks-not other students. The following assessments are utilized in early childhood programs:

* Brigance Screen is an assessment tool for kindergartners. It assesses children's instructional level, assists in program planning and identifies children who need a more comprehensive evaluation.

* Developmental Checklists allow teachers to collect, record and maintain individual student achievements and program data. They also help parents understand expectations for students. The Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 2 programs utilize the Des Moines Developmental Checklist and Head Start employs its own version of the system.

* The Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is a child-specific assessment tool utilized by the Early Childhood Special Education Preschool Program to determine a child's present level of educational performance and to provide individual goals.

* The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is an inter-agency planning tool utilized by the Early Childhood Special Education Early Intervention Program. The IFSP is used to assess the needs of young children with disabilities and their families. It helps determine agencies responsible for provision of services and outlines the procedures for monitoring children's progress.

* Portfolios provide direct access to the ideas and abilities of children. These samples of individual work allow parents and teachers to examine children's continuing progress.

* Play-based assessment involves observing a child's overall development in the areas of speech, language, physical & motor, social-emotional and cognitive development. Play-based assessment is implemented by a team which consists of the parents and educators whom are knowledgeable of all areas of development. During play-based assessment children naturally engage in play activities. Various team members interact with the child during play and fill out checklists which measure the developmental levels of the domains being assessed.

Assessment is integral to curriculum and instruction. In early childhood the primary purpose of assessment is for teachers to plan instruction for individuals and groups and to communicate with parents.

Due to the nature of child development and how children learn, it is extremely difficult to develop reliable and valid measures of young children's abilities. When tests are used to make decisions which have great impact on children's lives, they must offer the highest assurance of reliability and validity. Many of the important skills that children need to acquire are social competence, desire to learn, willingness to take a risk and self esteem.

The district early childhood programs accept all children without formal testing, placing them in heterogeneous groups. Standardized testing is minimized.

Influence of Technology

Early Childhood Education staff utilize technology on a daily basis. Personal computers and links with Mid-Iowa Computer Center allow the departments to operate efficiently. Staff have completed a variety of computer classes offered by staff development and Heartland Area Education Agency, i.e., Mid-Iowa Computer Center accounting, student accounting, MacDraw and versions of Microsoft Works and Word. A data base is being developed to track students as they enter the district through early childhood programs and to assist with the billing of fee-based programs. Staff will be trained to use the Comprehensive Information Management System (CIMS) software. Supervisors and early childhood staff have served as members of district and building technology committees.

The fee-based child care and preschool programs have eight Power Macintosh computers, three Macintosh LC's and one IBM computer. The software consists of Works, several children's programs of literature, math and general development. There are 10 Power Macintosh computers and several software programs for use by office staff and teachers.

The computers in the early childhood classrooms enhance instruction, social interactions, problem-solving, decision making, development of fine motor skills and creativity. Assistive technology is utilized for children with special needs. Currently, the McKinley and Wallace demonstration sites have computer technology funded by fee-based preschools and Title 1, while the Head Start programs have funded technology at Smouse, Findley and Lucas.

By the fall of 1997, all Head Start classrooms will be equipped with computers. The Findley and Lucas ECSE/Head Start staff will assist other early childhood staff in the implementation of developmentally appropriate learning strategies using the computer. Staff will participate in staff development computer training during 1997-98.

In-service and Staff Development

Coordinators, supervisors, specialists and program managers have offered seminars, support groups, sharing sessions and site visitations to assist in the understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practices. Participation has varied depending on the topic, the scheduled date, the weather, the presenter and other factors. The establishment of site based management, the building improvement plans, and the early dismissal days for staff collaboration have increased staff development participation at the building level and reduced the number of staff attending district-wide offerings.

- Accreditation/Self Study NAEYC
- Art Activities for Young Children
- Assessment of Autism
- Blood Borne Pathogens (OSHA training)
- Bridging the Gap Between Cultures
- Child Abuse Reporter Training
- Child Development
- Children's Sexual Development
- Community and Family Involvement
- Community Skills
- Confidentiality
- Conflict Management
- Controlling Infectious Diseases
- Creating Rubrics
- Curriculum Design
- Development of Themes and Topics
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Discipline Techniques
- Early Childhood Education Framework
- Early Childhood Research and Practices
- Ethics
- Extended Day Kindergarten
- Facilitating Integration
- Families Under Stress
- Family-centered Practices
- Family Style Meals and Snacks
- First Aid/CPR
- Guidance for Young Children
- Health and Safety
- High Scope PreK-3: An Active Learning Environment
- How to Setup and Use Learning Centers
- Identifying and Developing Community Resources
- Information on Creative Activities for Curriculum Areas
- Intervention to Prevent Biting
- Integrating the Curriculum
- Interagency Collaboration
- It's Not the Method in Your Class, It's the Class in Your Method
- Literacy: Developing a Print Rich Environment
- Math with Preschool Children
- Medicine Dispensing Training
- Meeting the Needs of Families
- Meeting Special Needs
- Monthly Sharing Sessions for K-1-2 teachers
- Multicultural Activities/Strategies
- Music and Movement with Young Children
- Outdoor Projects
- Outreach and Recruitment Strategies
- Problem Solving Approach to Behavior Management
- Professionalism
- Progress Monitoring
- Project Approach, Integrating Children's Learning
- Project TEACH (instructional teaching for children with autism)
- Promoting Literacy with Flannel Board Stories
- Reggio Emilia in Theory, Reggio Emilia in Practice
- Safety on the Bus
- Self-Assessment Program Evaluation
- Sensory Activities
- Sexual Harassment Training
- Special Education Referral Process
- Sign Language
- Strategies for Teachers
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- The Creative Curriculum: Review
- The Primary Program
- Transition Process
- Understanding Ourselves and Our Families
- Use of Brigance Screen and Des Moines Developmental Checklist
- Visitations for ECSE teachers to observe typical children in their classrooms
- What to Expect from Three- and Four-Year-Olds
- Working with Groups

PRODUCT EVALUATION

Contributing to the Mission of the District

Early childhood education serves as the foundation for future educational and life experiences. In early childhood programs, activities address the developmental, emotional and physical needs of children. They also assist children and their families to adopt a positive attitude toward future learning experiences. Early encouragement of spontaneity, curiosity, self-discipline and personal relationships assist in the development of the child's social and emotional health. Establishing patterns and expectations of success for the child also create a climate of confidence for present and future learning efforts. Although early childhood education teaches children a variety of important skills, this enhancement of self-dignity and self-worth is critical. A child's concept of self continues throughout his/her future life experiences. Hence, early childhood education programs prepare children for school and later success.

Costs Versus Benefits of Early Childhood Education

Quality services that strengthen families and support child development have far-reaching, long-term benefits. Families and children who do not receive timely and quality care, however, often require more costly services in future years. For example, we can choose to spend: [1]

$1 on childhood immunizations	OR	$10 in later medical costs
$1 on comprehensive prenatal care for women through Medicaid	OR	$3.38 in later health costs
$1 for quality preschool education	OR	$4.75 for later special education, crime, welfare and other costs
$850 for one year of compensatory education	OR	$4,000 for the cost of a single repeated grade
$4,500 per family for family preservation services	OR	$10,000 for one year of foster care for one child

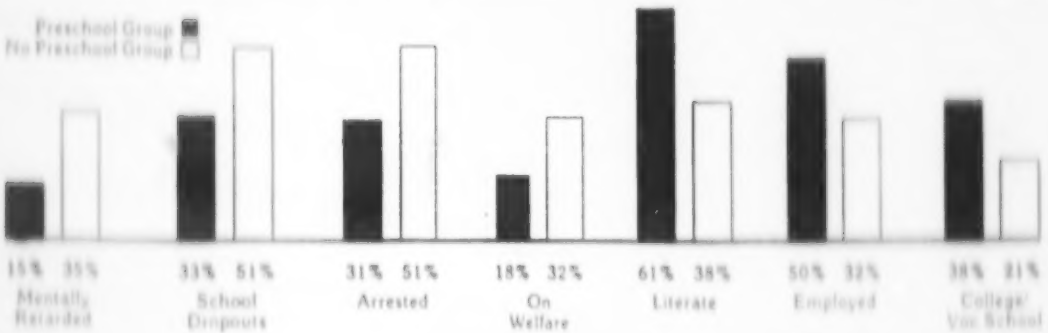
[1] These 1991 figures are adapted from the Children's Defense Fund. They were published in *Caring Communities: Supporting Young Children and Families*, the Report of the National Task Force on School Readiness, which was published by the National Association of State Boards of Education in December 1991.

High/Scope Perry Preschool Study

The High/Scope Foundation's Perry Preschool study strikingly demonstrates the potential benefits of high quality early childhood programs. In the study, low-income 3- and 4-year olds were randomly assigned either to a group that attended the Perry Preschool program or to a group that did not. Follow-up showed that preschool participation had apparently increased the percentages of persons who, at age 19, were literate, employed and enrolled in postsecondary education, whereas it had reduced the percentages who were school dropouts, labeled mentally retarded and on welfare.

Such impressive results were achieved only by good preschool programs that were characterized by the following: developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment procedures; teaching teams that were trained in early childhood development and received ongoing training; administrative support that included curriculum leadership; classes with two adults and fewer than 20 children; and systematic efforts to involve parents as partners in their children's education. Such programs may be relatively expensive, but a good, expensive preschool program with a high return on investment makes more economic sense than a poor, inexpensive program with a low return.

High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Age-19 Findings



Adherence to Standards, Policies, and Regulations

The early childhood education programs are in compliance with local, state and federal standards. A complete listing of statutes and administrative regulations can be found in Appendix 3. The licensed fee-based programs are reviewed by the Iowa Department of Human Services on an annual basis and are in compliance with all regulations.

Early Childhood Special Education also adheres to state and federal guidelines and compliance is reviewed by Heartland Area Education Agency, the Iowa Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. An On-Site Peer Review (OSPRI) is conducted annually of the Head Start Program. Every three years a federal review is completed using the same instrument. The program was found to be in compliance with all standards and regulations. Head Start is also reviewed by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and USDA Child and Adult Food Programs.

Accomplishments Based on Needs and Future Plans Identified in 1993 Report

The "Future Plans" section of the 1993 Report listed the following goals or concerns. The accomplishments relative to these concerns are described under each item.

1. Two schools will be selected for demonstration sites for implementation of The Primary Program or High Scope to focus on integration of early childhood programs.

   Response:
   Wallace School was selected in 1994-95 to be the first demonstration site to provide an integrated multi-age program with kindergarten, Head Start, Des Moines Preschool Program and Early Childhood Special Education. The High Scope Curriculum is one of the components of the curriculum that includes key experiences, manipulatives, choices and discovery learning. Funding from each of the above programs plus Title I was used to plan and develop the demonstration site that took as its name the WELCOME Program standing for the Wallace Early Learning Center offering a Model Education. Staff met regularly to plan and evaluate. Teachers are encouraged to visit the WELCOME Center and be involved or a spectator in the demonstration project. Visitation dates were listed in the Staff Development Handbook.

   The second demonstration site was established in 1995-96 at McKinley School. The early childhood area includes kindergarten, ESL kindergarten, Head Start, Des Moines Preschool Program, Early Learning Center and Early Childhood Special Education children. Funding comes from each of the programs as well as support from Title I. The Primary Program Curriculum is utilized in a multi-age approach. Staff concerns are addressed at regular meetings with coordinators and supervisors.

2. A system utilizing seminars, support groups, sharing sessions, peer coaching, mentoring and site visitations will be initiated to help implement developmentally appropriate practices.

   Response:
   A variety of staff development options were offered to staff through collaboration within the district and other agencies and resources. Specific topics are listed on page 21 of this document.

3. Integrated opportunities will be expanded to reflect the diversity in cultures, disabilities and socio-economic status present in our district.

   Response:
   Integration opportunities have increased to 17 sections throughout the district. This means that approximately 65% of students enrolled in Early Childhood Special Education are integrated with students in other early childhood programs. This is a 15% increase from 1992-93.

4. All early childhood teachers should have computer work stations by the year 2005. Children in early childhood programs should have access to computers for instructionally related activities on a ratio of one computer for every five children. Assistive technology is necessary to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Response:
Preschool teachers have not been included in state technology dollars. Computers have been purchased by Head Start for all Head Start classrooms. The fee-based preschool program has purchased seven computers. Teachers of ECSE in technology demonstration schools have been provided computers. Funds were not available to provide computers for children on a ratio of 1:5. Assistive technology is provided to children with disabilities as indicated on their individual educational program.

5. Additional space for preschool programs is needed.

Response:
Lack of dedicated space for early childhood programs continues to be a critical problem throughout the district. It is not possible to locate classrooms in the elementary schools to expand the availability of all preschool programs. Without additional funding the outlook for achieving this has been diminished.

6. Provide more effective transitions for students as they move between programs.

Response:
Transition planning is an important (and in some programs a mandated) component of early childhood programs. Effective transitions occur when families, current service providers and future service providers meet at least six months in advance of a program change. Staff at all blended programs have strengthened this component. Three programs have received state transition grants to do this. All staff in Early Childhood Special Education provide transition information to the receiving teacher. The program staff in the preschool programs assist families as they move to school-age programs.

7. Implement a plan for meaningful, productive collaboration to better serve children.

Response:
Collaboration with district and community agencies and services continues to be a focus of early childhood programs. Collaboration with district child study teams, Way to Grow and Success programs, Scavo High School (Scavo Health Center) and Mercy Franklin Center help provide quality services for children.

8. All four-year old children need an opportunity to participate in high quality, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten programs. Early childhood advocates must continue to work for equity access to early childhood services for all children.

Response:
Children who do not qualify for Head Start, ECSE or who do not have the resources to pay tuition in fee-based programs often do not have the opportunity to participate in high quality preschool experiences. Each year approximately 1,800 children participate in district preschool programs.

Improvements During Last Three Years

During the last three years there have been a number of expansions and improvements in early childhood education.

- The number and variety of integrated experiences for children with disabilities and children without disabilities have steadily increased. Three main types of integrated opportunities are offered by the district: co-location, full integration and reverse mainstreaming. Approximately sixty-five percent of the children enrolled in the ECSE classrooms are involved in integrated experiences.

- The Early Childhood Special Education Infant/Toddler program has strengthened coordinated efforts with Heartland Area Education Agency 11 to enhance its services and meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. There is a single point of entry for both programs. Both agencies utilize the same procedures in their work with families of children birth to three years of age. This has improved efficiency in serving families within the AEA 11 service area.

- The Early Childhood Special Education and Head Start programs have increased their interagency involvement in order to provide comprehensive services. Both programs work with social and human service agencies, the medical community, the department of public health, job training programs and a variety of other community organizations. This collaboration minimizes duplicate services and allows agencies to focus on the specific needs of the children and their families.

- Under the auspices of the Parent Child Center of Head Start, pregnant women and children through three years old living in the King and Wallace attendance areas are being provided early intervention services through state at-risk funds and federal funding. These are part of Drake University Head Start.

- The Metro Kids Before/After School Child Care Program has continued its expansion. The program served over 2,700 children in elementary schools during the 1996-97 school year.

- Metro Kids Care and Metro Arts Alliance have teamed together to provide creative opportunities for children enrolled in after school care at each elementary school.

- Community participation has continued to increase. Community organizations have collaborated to provide projects and funding for various early childhood programs.

- The Metro Kids Care Program has expanded the hours of child care on collaboration days and begins immediately at the close of the student day in order to help individual buildings conduct Building Improvement Plan sessions. The program begins at 6:45 a.m. in all buildings.

- The Des Moines Montessori Program has expanded to serve 6 - 9 year olds in a multi-age setting and served an additional 21 children 6 - 9. The Montessori Program moved from Hillis to Cowles in the fall of 1996.

- The Cowles Children's Center initiated the process, completed the self-study and has been validated for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Early Learning Centers at Moulton, Lucas and McKinley Elementary Schools, the kindergarten classes at Lucas Elementary School and all Head Start programs have been accredited. Programs receiving accreditation have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families.

- There is an increased commitment in early childhood programs to serve English as a Second Language children. Staff collaborate with district personnel and community agencies in providing appropriate services through the use of interpreters, identifying staff who have proficiency in other languages and implementing appropriate programming.

Strengths of Early Childhood Education

The district's early childhood programs offer a variety of services to a diverse population. The programs also advocate early intervention, developmentally appropriate methods, comprehensive services for the child and the family and parent involvement. Strong early childhood education services have resulted from program philosophies, their implementation by dedicated, qualified staff and support from the Board of Directors. Other major strengths of the district's early childhood programs and services are:

- Addressing the needs of children and their families
- Benefits for child care workers (AFSCME)
- Collaborative agreements with other community agencies and organizations
- Commitment of staff
- Cooperation and collaboration between the district's programs, staff and administrators
- Early intervention programs prenatal - 3 years
- Staff with early childhood endorsements and certifications
- Parent involvement
- Nationally accredited programs
- Proximity to other educational institutions
- Support of Board of Directors in regard to program expansion and developmentally appropriate practices.
- Variety of quality program options and locations available to the community

Metro Kids Care

The services of early childhood education have expanded significantly during the last decade in response to community demand. The enrollment figures of Metro Kids Care increased from 191 students in 1983-84 to over 2,700 in 1996-97.

Cowles Children's Center

During its first year of operation in 1987-88, Cowles Children's Center served 21 children. Licensed capacity increased from 126 to 165 in 1996 and the center continues to operate at full capacity.

Des Moines Head Start Programs

Des Moines Head Start Program continues to serve preschoolers who meet the federal eligibility guidelines. Because of federal funding and state licensing requirements, the number of children served remains at 424, Drake University Head Start has four additional programs in the district (Tiny Tots, Oakridge, Grand Avenue, MiEscuelita).

Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Special Education continues to serve preschoolers with special needs. Expanded child find efforts and community awareness helped identify additional children. Enrollment increased from 283 in 1995-96 to 301 in 1996-97.

Des Moines Preschool Program

The Des Moines Preschool Program has continued to enroll over 800 children each year. Parents recognize the value of a high quality preschool program and pay fees to the district to provide the preschool services.

The Des Moines Preschool Program served 831 students during the 1996-97 school year. At the conclusion of the year 386 students (58%) indicated eligibility for kindergarten. Of those students eligible for kindergarten in fall 1997, 319 students (82.6%) planned to enroll in the Des Moines Public Schools with 18 students (4.7%) remaining undecided.

Preschoolers Enrolling For Kindergarten in Des Moines and Other Districts

	Number of Students		Percentage of Students	
School District	Preschool	Head Start	Preschool	Head Start
Des Moines	319	361	82.6%	91.0%
Undecided	18	12	4.7%	3.8%
Catholic Schools	15	5	3.9%	1.2%
Outside Metro area	9	0	2.3%	0.0%
Southeast Polk	8	4	2.1%	1.0%
Johnston	5	1	1.3%	
West Des Moines	4	3	1.0%	.7%
Saydel	3	4	.8%	1.0%
Urbandale	2	3	.5%	.7%
Waukee	2	0	.5%	0.0%
Ankeny	1	0	.3%	.7%
	386	393		

Enrollment in Preschool Programs

Year	Preschool	Head Start	ECSE
1994-1995	791	465	290
1995-1996	808	483	283
1996-1997	831	457	301

Head Start Summary

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Ethnicity			
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7	3	3
Asian or Pacific Islander	19	14	30
Black	138	141	123
Hispanic	29	33	26
White	296	292	275
Dominant Language:			
English	465	461	432
Spanish	10	6	13
Asian Languages	13	16	12
Native American Language	0	0	0
Medical Services			
Number Completed Medical Screening	488	468	457
Diagnosed As Needing Treatment	220	126	142
Children Completed Treatment	204	113	133
Dental Services			
Number Completed Dental Screenings	489	478	457
Diagnosed As Needing Treatment	132	121	83
Children Completed Treatment	112	97	68
Children Who Received Preventive Care	285	478	270
Immunization Services			
Received prior to Enrollment	482	422	451
Received after Enrollment	7	50	6
Diagnosed with Disability by Age			
3 year old	7	3	16
4 year old	55	49	40
5 year old	3	2	4

Diagnosed Disability			
Emotional/Behavior Disorder	6	0	1
Speech/Language Impairments	39	29	23
Mental Retardation	12	1	1
Hearing Impairment	0	0	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	1
Non-Categorized/Development Delay	6	24	33
Kindergarten			
Number Of Children Entering Kindergarten	441	423	393

Early Childhood Special Education Placement Information

During 1992-93, 236 children, birth through age six, received services from Early Childhood Special Education. In 1996-97 this number was approximately 329. This number represents the total number of children enrolled in the program throughout the year.

The chart below indicates the placement for each child leaving the Early Childhood Special Education program during the 1996-97 school year.

Placement	1996-97	%
Kindergarten	8	12
Kindergarten with Resource Assistance	20	29
Special Education - Mild	33	49
Special Education - Moderate/Severe/Profound	7	10
Total	68	100

Early Childhood Social Skills Development Study

The Early Childhood Special Education program conducted a study during 1994-95 to determine the benefits of providing integrated early childhood programs for students with special needs. In the study, the social skills of typical and special education students across three types of integration models and special education students receiving no integration were compared.

There were 249 students represented in the study. The following chart shows the results of the study.

Social Skill Performance of Special Education and Typical Preschool Children

Program (Count)	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Full integration		
Special Educ. (29)	98.2	115.5
Typical (57)	148.1	158.8
Reverse integration		
Special Educ. (10)	127.3	145.5
Typical (14)	151.6	161.7
Partial integration		
Special Educ. (48)	114.4	137.9
Typical (22)	132.9	151.6
No integration (30)	75.1	112.6
Control group (39)	152.6	162.1

Generally, it did not matter in which program children were served. All children grew in social skills. Data supported the belief that typical children's social skills would not be negatively affected as a result of their participation in a program with children with disabilities. No program produced statistically significant higher overall gains for students.

Additionally, a parent satisfaction survey was completed as part of this study. No less than 75 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the preschool program benefited their child and the parents felt positive about the experience. Ten of the thirteen items showed greater than 85 percent of parents strongly agreed or agreed with each statement. No group of parents, as disaggregated by type of program, differed significantly on their overall satisfaction with the program their child attended.

Metro Kids Parent Survey

Based on a 21% initial return of 208 parent surveys for the 1996-97 school year and compared to the 224 parent surveys returned to the district at the end of the 1994-95 school year, the Metro Kids Care Program continues to enjoy excellent ratings for services rendered as shown in the table below.

The Percent of Positive Parent Responses

	Appropriate Activities	Appropriate Space	Child Enjoys Participation	Caregiver response to child needs	Good Caregiver/ Parent communication	Caregivers encourage positive behavior
1994-95	93%	90%	90%	92%	83%	85%
1996-97	97%	90%	93%	93%	86%	85%

Individual Skill Survey

The preschool children evaluated, using items taken from the developmental skills checklist, were present both the fall and spring of 1995/96 or 1996/97. Each preschool teacher used the same assessment form which included language skills, physical skill, physical skills for self help, social and emotional skills and thinking skills. The assessment items were selected from the more comprehensive developmental checklist developed by representatives of Head Start, private preschools in the area and the Des Moines Preschool Programs.

For the 4-5 year old checklist, data were collected from 20 preschool sites in both 1995/96 and 1996/97. In 1995/96, 394 children were assessed. There were 380 children assessed in 1996/97. In 1995/96, 158 students from 17 sites were assessed with the 3-4 year old checklist. In 1996/97, there were 219 children assessed at 20 sites.

Percent of Children Able to Perform
Each of the Skills on Three-Four Year Old Checklist

Individual Skills	Fall 1995	Spring 1996	Fall 1996	Spring 1997
Language Skills				
Talks in sentences of three or more words	69.5	94.0	78.9	92.8
Answers simple questions appropriately	62.0	94.7	73.4	88.6
Physical Skills				
Walks up and down stairs independently	69.4	91.3	83.2	90.8
Runs	78.7	93.9	92.9	96.1
Claps with music	60.2	88.6	69.9	86.9
Uses paint, paste, glue	64.7	94.2	64.8	95.2
Snips with scissors	55.3	87.5	58.8	87.6
Works a puzzle of three or more interlocking pieces	75.0	98.5	61.8	81.7
Physical Skills for Self-Help				
Uses restrooms appropriately	78.6	94.1	81.0	90.4
Washes and dries hands alone	75.8	97.6	81.3	91.4
Social and Emotional Skills				
Feels good about self and abilities	68.8	87.2	77.7	90.0
Identifies own feelings	56.8	80.9	69.4	90.1
Enjoys parallel play and begins to interact with other children	59.3	94.9	75.1	96.6
Shares toys, takes turns with encouragement	59.5	87.8	68.8	89.9
Begins to participate in a group	63.3	95.8	63.7	89.4
Separates from caregiver	75.3	97.9	81.5	96.1
Begins to follow established school rules	71.2	91.8	69.0	91.4
Participates in clean up with encouragement	64.3	88.4	66.9	86.9
Thinking Skills				
Stays with a variety of activities five to ten minutes	74.7	99.2	69.4	82.5

Percent of Children Able to Perform
Each of the Skills on Four-Five Year Old Checklist

Individual Skills	Fall 1995	Spring 1996	Fall 1996	Spring 1997
Language Skills				
Talks in sentences of six or more words	71.9	94.6	84.3	97.8
Speaks so others can hear	64.3	92.6	75.0	94.6
Verbalizes full name, address, age, telephone number	22.0	57.0	63.6	86.5
Repeats songs and fingerplays	64.1	94.0	70.4	90.5
Physical Skills				
Uses paint, crayons, markers, paste, glue, scissors, with purpose	71.7	98.5	75.5	98.5
Works a puzzle of ten or more interlocking pieces	65.9	93.2	71.4	95.5
Physical for Self-Help				
Dresses self	77.1	97.3	92.2	94.4
Puts on coat	73.4	97.3	87.0	95.2
Puts on shoes	64.7	95.7	not assessed*	
Shows awareness and meets own physical needs	79.9	99.6	95.0	100.0
When necessary uses tissue	83.0	98.0	97.0	99.4
When necessary washes hands	83.2	99.4	99.4	100.0
When necessary uses restroom	87.8	99.1	98.3	100.0
Social and Emotional Skills				
Feels good about self and abilities	68.3	93.2	85.1	95.1
Plays and interacts with other children	68.9	94.2	82.6	98.2
Participates and stays with group	72.2	94.2	86.3	94.3
Follows established school rules most of the time	79.8	95.0	88.2	98.2
Thinking Skills				
Begins to recognize meaningful use of print	54.2	93.2	61.1	90.9
Stays with a variety of activities for more than 10 minutes	68.0	97.0	84.3	98.1

*Upon the advise of teachers this item was deleted because putting on shoes is not a part of the normal preschool routine.

Summary of Preschool Assessment

Each of the five skill areas includes one or more indicators. These indicators are the skills and tasks that are specifically taught or for which opportunity is given to practice as part of the preschool curriculum. In 1995-96 and 1996-97 for the three-four year old checklist, on all groups of indicators, significantly more children were able to do the skills in spring as compared to fall. On the four-five year old checklist in 1995-96 and 1996-97 on all groups of skills, significantly more children were able to do the skills in spring as compared to fall. Generally, significantly more children are able to do the skills at the end of the school year than at the beginning.

Preschool Health Services

Preschool health screenings provided by the preschool nurse include vision screening, check for record of adequate immunization and check for communicable diseases such as head lice when warranted. Hearing screening is conducted by audiologists from Heartland Area Education Agency. The preschool program attempts to screen every child enrolled. Occasionally children are absent and are unable to be screened.

Health Service	1994-1995		1995-1996		1996-1997	
Screenings Completed	Tested	Referred	Tested	Referred	Tested	Referred
Vision Screening	572	13	605	12	602	11
Hearing Screening	596	53	465	54	560	52
Immunizations	791	40	808	54	831	32

Preschool Special Services

Based on teacher referrals, the preschool program arranges for screening and/or evaluation of students for speech and language, cognitive, physical and behavior development. Often strategies are given to the teacher which help the child to achieve success in the preschool classroom. At other times support services are provided or an alternative placement is made.

	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997
Speech	791 Tested	808 Tested	831 Tested
Evaluated and qualified or receiving services	14	12	15
Evaluated and did not qualify for services	15	6	11
Evaluation to be scheduled or rescheduled	3	0	1
Monitored on regular basis by speech personnel	0	3	0
Special Education			
Staffed into Early Childhood Special Education	3	4	4
Receiving special education services	2	0	0
Receiving special education services outside DMPS	1	0	0
Evaluated and did not qualify for services outside DMPS	1	0	0
Other			
Moved to kindergarten after speech evaluation	1	0	0
Observed by special education consultant and strategies given	4	7	11
Referred to school Building Intervention Team	4	2	1

Survey of Skills Needed for Entering Kindergarten

A survey (complete results available through Early Childhood Special Education) of all kindergarten teachers in the district was done in May, 1997, to determine which skills were thought to be necessary for successful participation in a kindergarten setting. A total of fifty-four teachers (70% of total) responded. The results of the survey identified skill areas that preschool teachers should include in their general program planning for skill development in preschool children.

The results of the survey indicate that more instruction in understanding and compliance to simple directions and opportunities to carry out directions given earlier in the school day needs to occur. Preschool teacher should also provide instruction on sitting quietly during large group activities with attention focused on the speaker. Instruction on following teacher directions, participating when appropriate and answering teacher questions would all be appropriate during this time of the school day. Teachers should also provide opportunities for group transitions.

Instructions with peers and adults, greeting peers and resolving conflicts with peers needs to be part of the social skill development of all students. Also instruction in securing teacher and/or peer attention should be given with opportunities to practice these skills in a variety of situations.

Kindergarten teachers also feel that it is critical that children enter school with the ability to follow simple rules and classroom routines to become independent in the classroom. Verbal and nonverbal cues should be repeated as part of the routine.

All of the above skills were thought to be "critical" areas for successful participation in kindergarten. This information will be shared with preschool teachers in order to provide instruction prior to kindergarten enrollment. Throughout the year, consultants and supervisors will assist teachers in integrating this information into the curriculum.

Brigance Screen of Kindergarten Children
1996-97

The Brigance Screen is an individual checklist that is criterion-referenced, standardized and norm-referenced. It measures children's actions in the classroom across a range of behavioral domains.

The Brigance Screen evaluates the following skills:

Personal Data Response	Rote Counting	Color Recognition
Identifies Body Parts	Picture Vocabulary	Follows Verbal Directions
Numeral Comprehension	Visual Motor Skills	Prints Personal Data
Syntax and Fluency	Gross Motor Skills	
Visual Discrimination - Forms and Uppercase Letters		

The Brigance was used to assess children at the beginning and end of the 1996-97 kindergarten year. Scores for 2,009 children were used to determine gains made over the kindergarten year.

All students, as a group, made growth from pre-test to post-test. All males, females, typical, and special education students showed statistically significant growth from pre to post-test scores.

The results of the Brigance Screen given at the beginning of the year were used to plan instruction to meet the individual needs of children and as a communication tool that was used with parents. The end-of-year scores revealed measures of learning and progress from the beginning to the end of the school year. The data provided information about children's mastery of critical readiness skills and their performance across domains.

FUTURE PLANS

1. A major focus of the combined early childhood programs will be to coordinate parent programs to increase and improve parents participation in their child's educational program.

   - A parent needs assessment survey will be developed and distributed related to training, information and service delivery of early childhood programs.
   - Analysis of the survey will be used to direct efforts related to education and involvement of parents utilizing a variety of formats and time schedules.
   - Staff will be encouraged to make more home visits, personal contacts and phone calls to establish stronger connection between home and school.
   - A web page will be designed to inform parents of training initiatives, provide current topical information and ideas for home activities.

2. Coordinate the support and educational opportunities for staff in order to more effectively and efficiently utilize early childhood resources for staff. (Cost estimate: none)

   - Develop, distribute and analyze a staff survey to determine educational and support needs of staff in all programs that serve young children.
   - A master schedule of training opportunities will be developed and distributed.
   - A coordinated presentation will be offered at the district inservice.
   - Assistance will be offered to staff in developing a professional growth plan and support provided to improve knowledge and skills.

3. In order to determine the long term effects of participation in early childhood programs, a longitudinal study will be conducted. The placement of children in elementary school programs will be analyzed according to the type of preschool program they attended. (Cost estimate: $2,000)

4. With the increase in the numbers of ESL students being served by the various preschool programs in our district, there is a need to better utilize the services available to this population within the district and the community. (Cost estimate: none)

   - Develop and maintain a listing of agencies that provide interpretive services in other languages.
   - Develop a resource listing of all services provided to ESL students and families in our community and district.
   - Coordinate services offered to families in other languages making sure that access is available to all.
   - Actively recruit applicants who are proficient in a second language.
   - Translate and purchase materials in other languages for use by children and families at home.

APPENDIX

Appendix I

Early Childhood Organizational Chart

Appendix 2

Early Childhood Program Locations

1996-97

Early Childhood Special Education
Cowles Elementary
Findley Elementary
Longfellow Elementary
Madison Elementary
McKinley Elementary
Mitchell Elementary
Perkins Elementary
Smouse Elementary
Wallace Elementary
Watrous Elementary

Early Learning Learning Centers
Lucas
McKinley
Moulton

Preschools Programs
Cowles Elementary
Cattell Elementary
Grace Lutheran Church
Granger Elementary
Hanawalt Elementary
Highland Park Christian Church
Hubbell Elementary
Madison Elementary
McKee Elementary
McKinley Elementary
Mitchell Elementary
Park Avenue Presbyterian Church
Phillips Elementary
Pleasant Hill Elementary
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Rice Elementary
Samuelson Elementary
Stowe Elementary
Wallace Elementary
Watrous Elementary
Windsor Elementary

Head Start Programs
Findley Elementary
Garten Elementary
King Elementary
Longfellow Elementary
Lucas Elementary
Mann Elementary
McKinley Elementary
Monroe Elementary
Moulton Elementary
Smouse Elementary
Wallace Elementary
Willard Elementary
Scavo High

Appendix 3

Early Childhood Policies, Standards, and Regulations

State of Iowa Standards (July, 1989) 12.5 (1) Prekindergarten Program
12.5 (2) Kindergarten Program
Head Start Performance Standards-45-CFR-1304
Head Start Performance Standards-45-CFR-1308
Individuals With disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Iowa Department of Human Services Child Day Care Centers and Preschools Licensing Standards and Procedures
Department of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Service, Amendment No. 17
Des Moines Public Schools Policies and Procedures
Drake University Policies and Procedures
Iowa Code
Iowa Rules of Special Education
Amendments to the Heard Start Act (PL 101-501)
ACYFIM 93-13 (4/5/93)
45 CFR 1301: Head Start Grants Administration
ACYFIM 92-19 (10/20/92)
45 CFR 1302: Head Start Grantee Selection
ACYFIM 92-19 (10/20/92)
45 CFR 1303: Head Start Appeals
ACYFIM 93-07 (3/9/93)
45 CFR 1304: Head Start Performance Standards
Amended by new 1306 and new 1308
45 CFR 1305: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment
ACYFIM 92-20 (11/25/92)
45 CFR 1306: Programing and Staffing Options
ACYFIM 93-01 (1/4/93)
45 CFR 1307: PCC Performance Standards in process
45 CFR 1308: Disability Services
ACYFIM 93-06 (2/17/93)
45 CFR 1309: Head Start Facility Purchases in process
45 CFR 1310: Head Start Transportation/Vehicles in process